

## Poetry.

### RIFTED CLOUDS.

W. S. WHITACRE.

Oh, sometimes I feel that my pathway is rough,  
And the goal is no far, far away;  
That life is a season with shadows enough  
To conceal the blest light of the day.  
And sometimes I seem to be treading a way  
That is desolate, lonely and drear;  
While others around me are blitheosme and gay—  
Truly, mine is a life without cheer.

Yet often I feel when the sunshine is bright,  
That its blessings are sweeter to me  
By far, than to those unto whom all the light  
Ever shines, unobscured and free.  
Blest moments are those when my soul doth  
commune  
With the Father of Love upon high,  
When the Spirit of Life doth my spirit attune  
To the music that floats from the sky.

Oh, sweet is the peace that comes into my soul,  
As I draw myself near to his feet;  
Like rivers of water that placidly roll  
To the ocean, and lovingly meet  
The tide, unresisting, in fondest embrace;  
So that the peace in my soul doth arise—  
It may flow through the desert where thorns  
interlace,  
But it meets with the tide in the skies.

O clouds that o'ershadow my pathway to-day,  
Ye are rifted by light from above,  
And the sunshine of heaven will drive you away  
Ere I reach the fair palace of Love.  
Beyond the dull circle of vision below,  
There's a life that is pure and complete;  
'T is a life unobscured, with love all aglow—  
Blessed life, e'en by faith thou art sweet.

## Contributions.

### THE CHURCH.

J. B. WAMPLER.

The term "church" is not found in the Old Testament or first covenant. God's people were known as Sons of God, and the Daughters of Zion. As a body of worshipers they constituted the congregation of the Lord, or the Great Congregation. Through the promise of God and a type, the living and crucified Redeemer, and the Blood of the Atonement, were clearly set forth. But the promised seed was unqualified for more than two thousand years from the creation. God first qualified the promised "Shiloh" to Abram who was of the ninth generation from Noah. God said to Abram "Through thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blest;" prior to this time the promise was open to the whole world, "Not to seeds as of many." But thy seed evidently referring to the legitimate seed by Sarai through whom, by Divine interposition Isaac was born. Abram had illegitimate seed by Hagar, Sarai's hand maiden, Ishmael who became a great nation and whose descendants are the Arabians. They

dwelt in the country south of Canaan, in the country through which the legal seed journeyed towards the earthly Canaan, typifying the Christian journey through this world among the illegitimate seed (the wicked of this world) toward the heavenly Canaan.

Through Isaac and Rebecca by Divine interposition of God, Jacob was born. After obtaining Esau's birthright, and wrestling with God and obtaining a blessing, God gave him a new name because he prevailed with God. The name "Israel" from which we have the appellation Israelites applying specifically to the legal descendants of Jacob, or Israel through whom we follow God's people down the stream of time to the coming of the "Shiloh," signifying the Messiah or Prince of Peace, of whose "government and kingdom there shall be no end."

Much idolatry and false worship was instituted and propagated during the many years prior to the coming of Christ. During this period God raised up special persons to restore his true worship. At the time of the advent of the "anointed Savior," there existed a number of sects who claimed to be true worshipers of God a few of which I will name. The Jews themselves were divided into a number of sects, some such as Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes. The Sadducees derived their name from "Sadoc," who flourished about 263 years before Christ. The Pharisees were divided into several sects, such as "Truncated" Pharisees and "Mortar" Pharisees. Of the "Truncated" sect it is said that in order that they might appear in profound meditation, as if destitute of feet, scarcely lifted them from the ground. And the "Mortar" Pharisee, who, that his contemplations might not be disturbed, wore a deep cap in the shape of a Mortar, which would only permit him to look upon the ground at his feet. Such expedients were used by these sects to captivate the admiration of the vulgar; and under the appearance of singular piety, they disguised the most licentious manners. The Herodians, who derived their name from Herod the Great, and the Gaulonites, who were Galileans and derived their name from Judas-Theudas, a native of Gaulon in upper Galilee.

I have not space nor time to refer to the philosophy, tenets, doctrines, traditions and innovations that were entertained, believed, taught and observed by these several sects. I simply speak of them to show the state and condition of the world at the time of the coming of Christ as the Redeemer. Amongst the Grecian sects were some who declaimed openly against religion, and denied the immortality of soul; of this kind were the Epicureans

and Academics. Another class were called Platonists and Stoics. The Stoics were a sect of heathen philosophers, who flourished about 350 years before Christ. The Epicureans derived their name from Epicurus, who was born about 242 years before Christ. Another Grecian sect existed, who were the followers of the old famous philosopher Aristotle, who was born about 384 years before Christ. The Platonists derived their name from Plato another philosopher who was born about 426 years before Christ. The Sceptic or Tyshonic sect have their name from Tysho, a Grecian philosopher.

Those who professed to believe the Oriental philosophy, were divided into three leading sects, which were subdivided into various factions. Some imagined two eternal principles, from whence all things proceeded; the one presiding over light, the other over matter, and by their perpetual conflict, explaining the mixture of good and evil that appears in the universe. Others maintained that the being which presided over matter, was an eternal principle, but a subordinate intelligence, one of those whom the supreme God produced from himself. They supposed that this being was moved by a sudden impulse to reduce to order the rude mass of matter which lay excluded from the mansions of deity, and also to create the human race.

A third sect entertained the idea of a triumvirate of beings, in which the *supreme deity* was distinguished both from the *material* evil principle, and from the creator of this sublunary world. That these divisions did really exist, is evident from the history of the sects which embraced this philosophy. From blending the doctrines of the Oriental philosophy with christianity, the Gnostic sects which were so numerous in the first centuries, derive their origin. The religious world was most assuredly groping in darkness when the "Daysman" came who could lay his hand upon both. The one hand reach the eternal throne and the other reach down and lift our common sinful humanity out of the horrible pit, sin and miry clay of iniquity, and place our feet upon the rock of our salvation, put a new song into our mouths, renew a right spirit within us, and establish our goings. God be praised for such a daysman, and for the day-star that arises in the hearts of the true Israel of God. Christ found the world in darkness, but to fulfill his mission he entered upon his work, calling out from among those whom the forerunner had "made ready and prepared for the Lord," twelve whom he ordained, and called them "Apostles." It seems to me that the "church" was set